

Application No.: 10/663,432

Docket No.: 4618-002

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (canceled)
2. (currently amended) The absorbent composite sheet as set forth in claim ~~[[1]]~~ 4, wherein said second layer contains 20 to 80% by mass of said cellulose type fibers.
3. (currently amended) The absorbent composite sheet as set forth in claim ~~[[1]]~~ 4, wherein said surface of said first layer is a smooth surface processed by a heating roll having a smooth surface.
4. (currently amended) An absorbent composite sheet, comprising:
a first layer on a liquid receiving side of the composite sheet and a second layer stacked below said first layer;
said first layer being a non-woven fabric comprising thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers,
said second layer being a non-woven fabric comprising cellulose type fibers entangled with thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers;
said first layer and said second layer being joined by fused bonds between the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first layer and the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said second layer; and
the absorbent composite sheet further comprising gaps between the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first layer for transferring a liquid from a top surface of said first layer to said

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second layer through said gaps:

~~The absorbent composite sheet as set forth in claim 1,~~ wherein said first layer has a fiber density in a range of 0.05 to 0.20 g/cm³ when a pressure of 4.9 kPa is applied thereto, said second layer has a fiber density in a range of 0.015 to 0.10 g/cm³ when a pressure of 4.9 kPa is applied thereto, and the fiber density of said first layer is higher than that of said second layer.

5. (canceled)

6. (new) The absorbent composite sheet as set forth in claim 4, wherein the difference in fiber density between said first layer and said second layer is greater than or equal to 0.05 g/cm³.

7. (new) An absorbent article consisting essentially of the absorbent composite sheet defined in claim 4, and a liquid blocking back sheet disposed below said second layer.

8. (new) The absorbent composite sheet as set forth in claim 4, wherein the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first layer and the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said second layer comprise at least a common synthetic material.

9. (new) The absorbent composite sheet as set forth in claim 4, wherein the first layer is free of said cellulose type fibers of said second layer, except at an interface between said first and second layers.

10. (new) The absorbent composite sheet as set forth in claim 9, wherein said composite sheet has opposite, generally planar and parallel surfaces defined by the top surface of said first layer and a bottom surface of said second layer, respectively.

11. (new) The absorbent composite sheet as set forth in claim 9, wherein the top

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surface of said first layer and a bottom surface of said second layer respectively define opposite surfaces of said composite sheet, said opposite surfaces are generally planar except in embossed regions where the fused bonds between the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first and second layers are located.

12. (new) An absorbent article comprising the absorbent composite sheet defined in claim 10, and a liquid impervious back sheet disposed below said second layer, wherein said second layer defines a primary absorbent body of said absorbent article.

13. (new) The absorbent article defined in claim 7, wherein said second layer defines a primary absorbent body of said absorbent article and the first layer has a portion that extends outwardly beyond a boundary of said second layer and is bonded to the back sheet.

14. (new) An absorbent composite sheet, comprising:
a first, fibrous layer on a liquid receiving side of the composite sheet and a second, fibrous layer stacked below said first layer;
said first layer being a first non-woven fabric comprising thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers which are hydrophobic and heat bonded together to define said first non-woven fabric;
said second layer being a second non-woven fabric comprising hydrophilic fibers mechanically entangled with thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers;
said first layer and said second layer being joined by fused bonds between the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first layer and the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said second layer, and
the absorbent composite sheet further comprising gaps between the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first layer for transferring a liquid from a top surface of said first layer to said second layer through said gaps;
wherein

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the first layer is free of said hydrophilic fibers of said second layer, except at an interface between said first and second layers; and

said composite sheet has opposite, generally planar and parallel surfaces defined by the top surface of said first layer and a bottom surface of said second layer, respectively.

15. (new) The absorbent composite sheet of claim 14, wherein a fiber density of said first layer is higher than that of said second layer.

16. (new) The absorbent composite sheet of claim 15, wherein the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first layer has a fineness lower than that of the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said second layer.

17. (new) The absorbent composite sheet of claim 16, wherein the fineness of the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first layer is from about 1.1 to about 4.4 dtex whereas the fineness of the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said second layer is from above 4.4 to about 8.8 dtex.

18. (new) The absorbent composite sheet as set forth in claim 16, wherein the opposite surfaces of said composite sheet are generally planar except in embossed regions where the fused bonds between the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first and second layers are located.

19. (new) The absorbent composite sheet as set forth in claim 16, wherein the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said first layer and the thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers of said second layer comprise at least a common synthetic material.

20. (new) The absorbent composite sheet as set forth in claim 14, wherein said first layer further comprises a surface active agent rendering the hydrophobic thermoplastic synthetic

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resin fibers of said first layer hydrophilic, and said hydrophilic fibers of said second layer are cellulosic fibers.

21. (new) An absorbent article comprising the absorbent composite sheet defined in claim 14, and a liquid impervious back sheet disposed below said second layer, wherein said second layer defines a primary absorbent body of said absorbent article and has a greatest liquid retaining capability among all components of said absorbent article.

22. (new) The absorbent article defined in claim 21, wherein the first layer has a portion that extends outwardly beyond a boundary of said second layer and is bonded to the back sheet.